



**giga**

**unicef**  
for every child



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Government of Belize and UNICEF Enter into Partnership to Transform Education Through Technology**

*Belmopan, May 12, 2023.*

The Government of Belize officially partnered with **Giga**: a global initiative by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to connect every school to the Internet and every young person to information, opportunity, and choice.

This partnership was launched on May 11 at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MoECST) and the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics and E-Governance will lead the Giga Belize initiative, which is projected to run for three years.

The Giga initiative provides support to **map** schools' Internet access; **monitor** the quality of the Internet connection in connected schools through Project Connect and the Daily Check App; and help identify gaps in infrastructure and **model** efficient solutions to make connectivity affordable and sustainable. Finally, Giga supports **contracting** for connectivity and designing competitive procurement processes for school connectivity. These actions make the process transparent and hold providers to a quality connectivity standard that enables Government to only pay for the connectivity that is provided to schools.

This launch is timely and in tandem with the MoECST's BESPlan 2021-2025 and national curriculum reform for competency-based learning and STEAM initiatives. MoECST has placed a high priority on connectivity, digitalisation, and digital education. In addition, this initiative is aligned with the National Digital Agenda of the Ministry of E-Governance to leverage technological applications and advancements in transforming lives.

According to the ITU, almost one-third of people across the world still do not have access to the Internet. The digital divide is an urgent and important global issue that Giga aims to address by connecting schools to the Internet. Around half of the world's schools are not connected to the Internet, depriving students of the opportunities that connectivity brings.

The Government of Belize is proud to partner with Giga to support the mission to advance school connectivity in Belize.

Every Belizean child should have the opportunity to engage in rich online learning. The Giga initiative will help to ensure that the most vulnerable children are connected, providing them access to better opportunities for education and future employment.

#### **Ends**

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